

Largent's Chapel

CT-1305

6519 Lower Marlboro Road, Lower Marlboro (Calvert County)

1868, public access

Largent's Chapel, also known as Lower Marlboro United Methodist Church, is an example of a vernacular Gothic Revival church set within a densely settled rural community along the Patuxent River. The one-story church features an extended steeple and open bell-tower, set within a gable-front roof. The Chapel's simple design details and form lend the building an emphasis of verticality. Largent's Chapel is significant as a representative example of a 19th-century Methodist church, and has played an important role in the history of nineteenth century Calvert County.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. CT-1305

1. Name of Property

(indicate preferred name)

historic Largent's Chapel

other Lower Marlboro United Methodist Church

2. Location

street and number 6519 Lower Marlboro Road not for publication

city, town Lower Marlboro vicinity

county Calvert

3. Owner of Property

(give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Mt. Harmony/Lower Marlboro United Methodist Church

street and number 300 E. Mount Harmony Road telephone 410.257.9491

city, town Owings state MD zip code 20736

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Courthouse liber GWD folio 5/396

city, town Prince Frederick tax map 14-1 tax parcel 121 tax ID number

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☐ Contributing Resource in National Register District
☐ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
☐ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
☐ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
☐ Recorded by HABS/HAER
☐ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
☒ Other: Church collection

6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	Contributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	1
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> defense	
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion	
		<input type="checkbox"/> domestic	
		<input type="checkbox"/> education	
		<input type="checkbox"/> funeral	1
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry	
		<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	
		<input type="checkbox"/> unknown	
		<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use	
		<input type="checkbox"/> other:	
			Total
			0

Number of Contributing Resources
previously listed in the Inventory

0

7. Description

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Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Largent's Chapel, also known as Lower Marlboro United Methodist Church, is an example of a vernacular church, with Gothic Revival detailing, set within a densely settled rural community along the Patuxent River. The building is set back from a small gravel street, and is surrounded to the east and south by a small parish cemetery. The one-story, rectangular gabled roof structure has a tower that projects from the west façade that supports an open section containing a bell, which is surmounted by a polygonal steeple. An ell addition, built in the late 1970s, extends from the east end of the south elevation towards the south. The Chapel's simple design details and form lend the building an overall sense of verticality.

The three bay by three bay church building is oriented towards the west and has a gable roof, covered with asphalt shingles, which projects slightly over the gable ends and eaves, and a masonry foundation, and is clad with vinyl replacement siding except where noted. The facade is accented by a protruding tower with steeple and entrance, which is placed in the center of the windowless step. The steeple is crowned by a narrow spire accented with a metal weather vane. The narrow tower supports a stage containing an open bell tower, added in 1905, with a working metal bell and simple brackets, which transitions into the lower stage of the tower via sloped sides. This lower stage is clad in wood shingles and features a square window set diagonally in the center of the west side. This section rests on top of a protruding gabled entrance with small returns. The entrance features a pointed lancet window, above a pair of wooden paneled doors. The doors are flanked on either side by recent metal electric light fixtures. The first story of the projecting tower contains one over one vinyl sash windows with shutters, on the north and south elevations.

The building's northern elevation features three symmetrically placed one over one vinyl sash windows with shutters. A brick chimney with corbelled end caps pierces the roofline along the north wall between the center and eastern bays. The elevation features a parged masonry foundation with piers.

The building's east elevation has a central projecting polygonal end with a hipped roof and narrow one over one wood sash windows with stained glass on the north and south angled sides of the end. The north elevation of the addition has a raised basement with a small rectangular window. A set of metal steps lead up from grade to a small landing outside of a vinyl door with nine fixed panes roughly in the center of the addition.

The south elevation of the main building contains a single one over one vinyl sash window with shutters in the western bay. The addition extends from the two other bays on the south elevation. The west elevation of the addition contains a pair of symmetrically placed, one over one vinyl sash windows. These windows are set above a basement entrance, which is accessed by a concrete stairwell with metal railing, and a vinyl door placed toward the west end of the basement level. The doorway is flanked to the west by a single rectangular window and to the east by a pair of similar windows. The west elevation of the addition contains a single one over one vinyl window.

The primary entrance on the west facade leads to a small rectangular room in the spire, which leads into a pair of double-paneled screen doors crowned by a frosted glass transom. The doors lead into the primary worship space, which features wooden pews leading towards a recessed polygonal end. Above the double doors is a six-

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part simple round rose window. The ceiling is accented by three iron structural ties, and a series of recently installed chandeliers and ceiling fans. Tongue and groove boards sheathe the ceiling and follow the shape of the roofline until forming a lower central plane. The chimneys or flues on either side of the sanctuary project into the space and are covered with plaster. While the flues originally serviced coal-burning stoves, the building is now heated by propane-fueled stoves. The central apse, recessed within a central curve, is surrounded by a spindled wooden alter. A door to the south leads to the addition which houses educational activities.

Two one over one stained glass windows in the apse were designed, made and installed by Anthony Scott Lavato in 1997. The glass in one features a descending dove with an olive branch. The other contains a cross and flame, a design based on the United Methodist church logo.

8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____

Specific dates 1868 **Architect/Builder** unknown

Construction dates 1868

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register ☐ Maryland Register ☒ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

Largent's Chapel is significant as a representative example of a 19th-century Methodist church, which played an important role in the history of 19th-century Calvert County. It is also a representative example of the vernacular Gothic Revival religious architecture found in this part of Maryland.

Under the leadership of Minister J. J. Largent, construction was completed in 1868. Records indicate that the interior of the church was renovated in 1889, with the addition of a 6 1/2-foot wide circular window presented by George Spicknall. A parsonage, built by Charles Spicknall, was constructed in 1899 on adjacent land. A four foot tall fence was added to the property in 1901, before which Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Hinman were notified by the church to "keep their chickens out of the church lot." A bell tower was added in 1905. In 1919, lots were acquired for the cemetery.¹ In 1901, the church was painted white with green shutters. In 1916, the church was again renovated, in which work items included plaster repair, and replacement of lath with North Carolina pine in tongue and groove construction. A cement walk was added in 1920. Electric lights were added in 1924, which replaced six lamp hanging chandeliers. The interior was also repainted to remove kerosene soot. In 1958, an extensive remodeling project was undertaken, which consisted of new underpinning for the foundation, a new roof, and structural metal rods placed in the church's interior. In 1960, church pews were replaced with pews from the Baird Seating Company in Baltimore, and the floor was sanded and refinished. The church interior was also repainted yellow. The church was again remodeled in the late 1970s, with the subsequent addition to the south.²

Lower Marlboro was created as "Marlborough," an official point of entry by an act of the Provincial Assembly in April 1706. The town was named to honor John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough. Lower Marlboro served as a maritime port throughout its history, and grew around the development of both Calvert County's agricultural and river transportation industries. By the late 19th century, it was noted that "the village was now quite busy, the steamboats came in on Sunday and laid over till Monday for loading. Captain and crews came

¹ "The Swampoodle Book: A Walk Back Through History – Lower Marlboro, Then and Now" (Calvert County Public Schools & Calvert County Office on Aging: Lower Marlboro, MD) 1983, 42

² A Century of Methodism: Largent's Chapel 1869 – 1969. Unpublished

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to [religious] services.”³ The Chapel is set within a small residential neighborhood known as “Swampoodle” for its tendency to experience frequent and minor flooding.

After the Revolutionary War the Methodist Church became the numerically dominant religious sect in Calvert County and remained so for much of the 19th and 20th centuries. The Calvert Methodist Circuit, which included Calvert and parts of Anne Arundel counties, ranked among the foremost charges of the Methodist Conference in America during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. In 1789, with 943 white and 909 black members, it was the largest in the United States. . . .⁴ Membership in the church continued to grow during the first half of the 19th century. In 1844 the Methodist Church split over the issue of slavery, with the Methodist Episcopal Church South seceding from the Methodist Episcopal Church. The issue of slavery and post-Civil War emancipation caused a deep division within Calvert County’s Methodist community, with the resulting segregation between racial communities who had initially worshipped together and separation of white congregations along social and political lines. The result of this schism in Calvert County was that even more Methodist Churches were built throughout the remainder of the 19th century.⁵ Methodist congregations, such as the one at Largent’s Chapel, played a particularly important role in the daily social life and history of Calvert County.

The architecture of 19th century churches in small rural settlements, such as Largent’s Chapel, reflects both the humble aspirations of the communities that built them, and the vernacular influence of style and design. Often, churches were initially plain gable front buildings, which continued to expand and add ornamentation and additions as the congregation became more prosperous. In addition, churches with active and sustained congregations were frequently remodeled. Largent’s Chapel demonstrates a common building trend in religious architecture, realized through its many remodelings. In addition, the elements of a multi-tiered, layered spire, tower and entrance lends a degree of both verticality and symmetry to the building, and are clearly vernacular expressions of Gothic Revival architecture. Religious architecture in the mid and late 19th century was strongly influenced by popular English theorists who believed that Gothic designs were the only “pure” architectural style that could properly reflect the Protestant spirit. While such high-style architectural theory was largely influential in the construction of urban masonry cathedrals, it was also clearly influential in the design and

³ “The Swampoodle Book: A Walk Back Through History – Lower Marlboro, Then and Now” (Calvert County Public Schools & Calvert County Office on Aging: Lower Marlboro, MD) 1983 42

⁴ Calvert County Historic District Commission. “Historic Sites Context Study and National Register Evaluation for Calvert County, Maryland” report prepared by Dames & Moore, 1995. 4-2

⁵ Ibid., 4-42 to 4-48.

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redesign of buildings such as Largent's Chapel, which sought to introduce design elements of "soaring verticality" and complex geometry within the context of small rural settlements. Often, rural 19th century churches such as Largent's Chapel were the most architecturally complex buildings within their communities.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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A Century of Methodism: Largent's Chapel 1869 – 1969. Unpublished

Calvert County Historic District Commission. "Historic Sites Context Study and National Register Evaluation for Calvert County, Maryland," report prepared by Dames & Moore, 1995.

"The Swampoodle Book: A Walk Back Through History – Lower Marlboro, Then and Now" (Calvert County Public Schools and Calvert County Office on Aging: Lower Marlboro, MD, 1983).

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property approx. 1.5 acres

Acreage of historical setting approx. 1.5 acres

Quadrangle name Lower Marlboro

Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundary of the surveyed property is marked as Tax Map 14, Parcel 121. The existing Parcel is concurrent with the historic setting, and includes character-defining resources and setting that relate to the property's construction and evolution.

11. Form Prepared by

name/title	Caleb Christopher, Architectural Historian , revised by Craig Tuminaro, Architectural Historian		
organization	URS Corporation	date	3.1.03, 5.5.04
street & number	200 Orchard Ridge Drive, Suite 101	telephone	301.652.2215
city or town	Gaithersburg	state	MD

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600

MODERN
SHED



DN

ADDITION

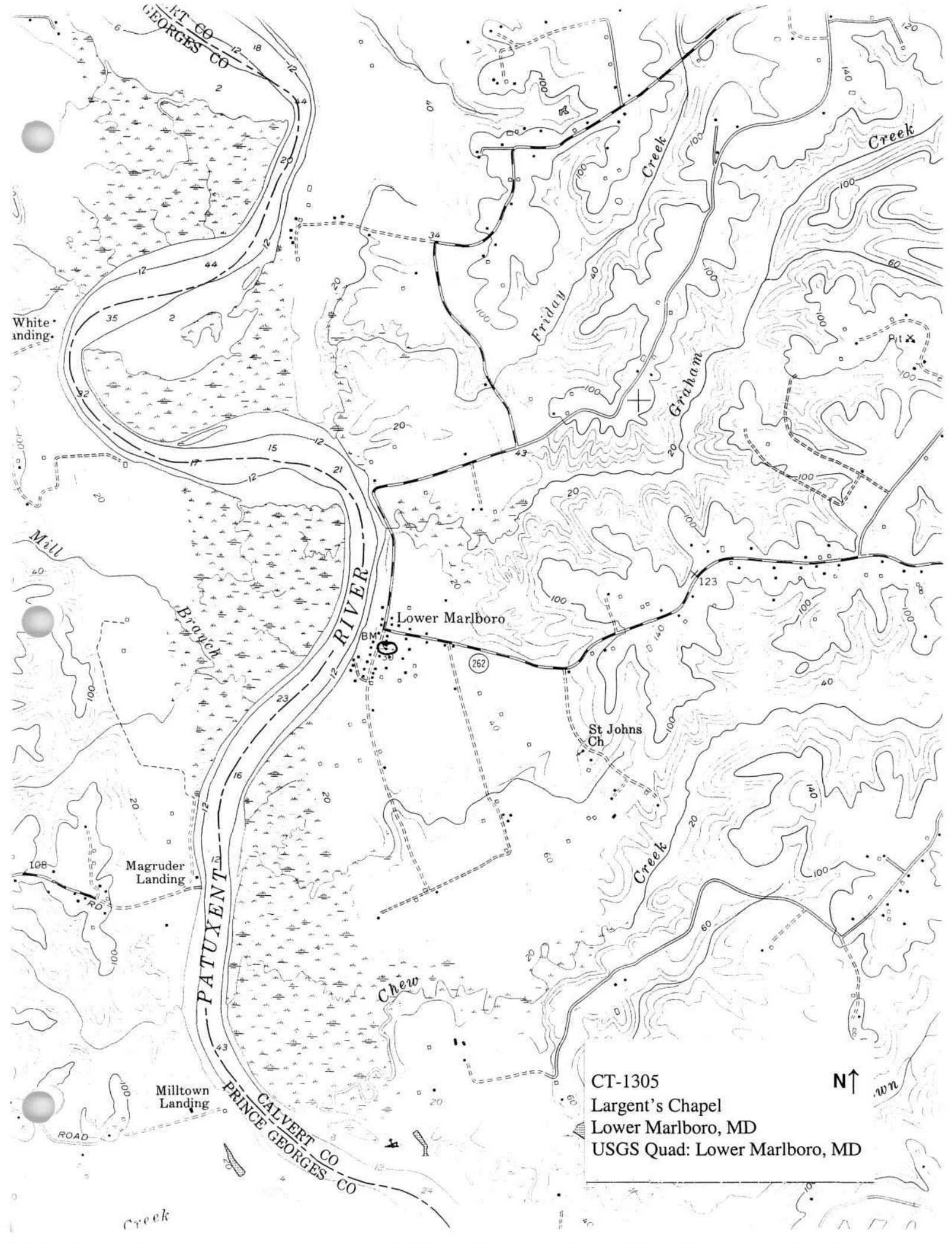
STEEPLE

TOWER

N

CT-1305
LARGENT'S CHAPEL
LOWER MARLBORO, CALVERT
COUNTY

RESOURCE SKETCH MAP
NOT TO SCALE



CT-1305
Largent's Chapel
Lower Marlboro, MD
USGS Quad: Lower Marlboro, MD



5.65 BA 0ANX4N NNN- 9 0038

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CT-1305
LARGENT'S CHAPEL
CAZUERT, MD
CALEB CHRISTOPHER
11/2002
NEGATIVE: MD SHPO

WEST FACADE

1 OF 6

66566



5.65 BA 0ANX4N NNN- 3 0038

009

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CT-1305

LARGENT'S CHAPEL

CALVERT, MD

CALEB CHRISTOPHER

11/2002

NEGATIVE MD STPO

NORTH ELEVATION

2 OF 6



WILKERSON

5.65 BA 0ANX4N NNN- 5 0038

012

CT-1305
LARGEST'S CHAPEL
CALVERT, MD
CALVERT, CHRISTOPHER
11/2002

NEGATIVE: MID SHPO

EAST ELEVATION

3 OF 6

66568



5.65 BA 0ANX4N NNN- 8 0038

013

CT-1305
LARGENT'S CHAPEL
CALVERT, MD
CALVERT CHRISTOPHER
11/2002
NEGATIVE: MD SHPO

SOUTH ELEVATION

4 of 6

66569



5.61 BA 0ANXIN NNN- 1 0038

023

CT-1305
LARGENT'S CHAPER
CHABERT, MD
CALEB CHRISTOPHER
11/2002
NEGATIVE: MD SHPB

INTERIOR VIEW OF
EAST END

5 of 6

66579



CT-1205
LARGENT'S CHAPEL
CALVERT, MD
CALEB CHRISTOPHER
11/2002
NEGATIVE: MD SHPO

5.65 BA 0ANX4N NNN- 1 0038

INTERIOR VIEW
OF WEST END

G OF G

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66567